

Interview H0222: with Gyankhar Nangpa [tib. rgyal mkhar nang pa], (India, 1981) : Part No. 1 of 1

The interviewee was an aristocratic government official. He talks about a law case regarding the ownership of his family estate. He also discusses the Lungshar incident in detail and how Kapshöba informed Trimön about Lungshar's plans and about Kapshöba's demotion. He also discusses his father's role in discovering the reincarnation of Reting and about Reting's death.

Q

Who was that Gyankhar Lingpa [tib. rgyal mkhar gling pa] at the time of the [Lungshar](#) [tib. lung shar] incident?

A

He was my maternal uncle. This was the time of the [Lungshar](#) [tib. lung shar] incident. He had misfortunes and there were many things that are not worth telling you. Actually, we were the main lineage. Our original lineage was from [Lungshar](#). At that time my grandmother was there; our female lineage was very capable. The father of my maternal uncle was an ex-government official (tib. shabsur [zhabs zur]) who came from the household called Chundo [tib. [chu](#) mdo] in Lhatse [tib. lha rtse]. He got together with my grandmother when he was working as an official acquiring rice for the government in Tinkyé [tib. gting skyes 'bras sgrub pa].

The two of them had seven sons. They left their children on a small estate and sent them to school there except for my grandfather. At that time, they didn't get along well with my grandfather. My grandmother's husband was also a capable person and he sent his children to school and he also made his son join the Tsikhang to be trained as a lay official. They agreed to share their livelihood with the two generations [on the estate and in the government]. They [my grandfather's son] served the government. We stayed on the small estate.

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At that time my father was living with Mentö [Sawang](#) [tib. sman stod sa dbang]. Mentö sawang told my father that he shouldn't remain like this and he brought my father to Lhasa. This was the time when Tsarong's [tib tsha rong] power was at its zenith. Mentö [Sawang](#) sent my father as the bridegroom (tib. [magpa](#) [mag pa]) of the lay official Segshingpa [tib. sreg shing pa].

So three of the sons remained in the family and one was sent as a [magpa](#). At that time, my maternal uncle, the shabsur, didn't have any children, so at that time Shelkarlingpa's [tib. shel dkar gling pa] Gönpö Wangchug [tib. mgon po dbang phyug], who was related to [Lungshar](#), shared their livelihood. My maternal uncle was knowledgeable in writing and the 13th Dalai Lama also regarded him highly and appointed him as the head of Phari Dzong. But he didn't behave well and he was sent to Powo Chödzog [tib. spo [bo](#) chos rdzong].

Since the shabsur didn't have sons, Gönpö Wangchug shared his livelihood with him. This was the time when [Lungshar](#) was at his zenith. They told my paternal aunt and her family, "We are serving the government and you are enjoying the things on the estate and using the pastures." Then they seized my uncle and said that they were going to lash him and did all kinds of reckless things and they also drove their animals away from the pasture and told them that they were not allowed to use the pastures and water, except the water near their house gate and the hay that they had inside the house. At that time, we had all the documents.

Although my father didn't have a good living condition, he was very knowledgeable. So my parents submitted a petition to the 13th Dalai Lama in Lhasa and complained that they were making us suffer like this. We had a lot of land tenure documents to prove ownership of the land because we had served at the border during the border dispute with the Nepalese. In the Iron-Monkey Year, one of my maternal relatives took a [magpa](#) called Namgyal [tib. nam rgyal] from Sikkim Yümai [tib. yul smad] and they held all of our estates and it was said that all of the relatives should belong to Sikkim. In that year we submitted a petition saying, "If the government gives the land to the Sikkimese, we don't want to be Sikkimese so please allow us to move to another place that belongs to the government." In the Wood-Tiger Year, a ruling was made on our petition saying, "The government gave them the land because they said they belonged to Sikkim on the border. Now you, Gyankhar Nangbu, can take the ownership of the estate as long as you provide the civil and the military taxes."

At that time only the Taring [tib. phreng ring] family said that they belonged to Sikkim. All the others belonged to the government. The present Taring became a lay official through

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his relations with Tsarong, although he belonged to Sikkim. As for the law case between us, the shabsur about how Gönpö Wangchug made us suffer, we submitted the petition and the approval was issued in the Wood-Tiger Year. We wrote in the petition, "We have been an old government official family and we have many relatives like Horkhang. When there was the trouble with Sikkim, we submitted a petition and requested to belong to the government and we are still serving the government. The bridegroom Tsewang Gyentsen [tib. tshe dbang rgyal mtshan] took ownership of the estate called Treding [tib. bkras lding]. Furthermore, Tsipungshar made his relative Shelkarlingpa Gönpö Wangchug share his livelihood with us and they controlled all the pastures and our animals didn't have pastures to graze and had to borrow pastures in Yülha [tib. yul lha]."

At that time, the former Dalai Lama appointed the Gusung Depön Nangkar [tib. snang dkar] as the investigator and the Dalai Lama told him, "I sent many edicts saying that whoever has seized the estates of the old government official families should return them. So you should do the investigation as soon as possible by talking with the local [dzong](#) and people." When Nangkar started to investigate the case, the shabsur side was very powerful. Therefore, Nangkar asked for leave from the investigation. So the two Kadrung [Bönshö](#) [tib. bon shod] and Dumkhang [tib. ldum khang] were appointed as the investigators. Dumkhang and [Lukhangwa](#) were brothers from the same parents.

Q

Was that the same [Bönshö](#) who later became the [Shape](#)?

A

Yes.

Q

Was that the present Dumkhang?

A

That was his father. Just after they started the investigation, the Dalai Lama passed away and Reting became the Regent. Then the two investigators made a plan and submitted it to the Regent and the Silön [tib. rgyal srid]. At that time, people involved in the [Lungshar] case were all in custody. There was the ex-[tsidrung] Shabsur Kongtrugla [tib. kong phrug lags], Phepola [tib. bal po lags], and Menriba [tib. sman ri ba]. There were almost half of

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the officials involved. When the government officials passed around the seal to be put on the document, [Lukhangwa](#) said, "I am not going to put the seal on it until I see the plan." They said, "It is a common affair [tib. spyi don]." Like this [Lukhangwa](#) didn't put his seal on it and [Trimön](#) [tib. khri smon] also didn't put on his seal.

After that, [Trimön](#) and [Lukhangwa](#) held a meeting with Reting. When the [Lungshar](#) party was holding their meeting, the clerk was [Kapshöba](#). Two days before they were going to arrest them [Trimön], since [Kapshöba](#) and [Trimön](#) were close, [Kapshöba](#) went to [Trimön](#) that night and said, "This is the reason why they are making a lot of documents. It was decided to arrest the Regent, [Trimön](#) and [Lukhangwa](#)." [Kapshöba](#) had composed many poems, but I won't be able to finish telling these things.

Right after that, [Trimön](#) went to [Lukhangwa](#) and told him what [Kapshöba](#) had said and they said that we shouldn't leave it like this, but should report it to the Regent. [Lukhangwa](#) went home and sent a [samtra](#) message to Reting telling him that the [Lungshar] party was probably plotting in this manner, "So if you remain like this," the message said, "it won't good. You should go to Drepung Phodrang." I also sent a [samtra](#) to the Silön telling him to go to Drepung." And then they called a few trustworthy officials from the Trungtsi, namely the [Trunyichemmo](#) and the Tshipön [Lukhangwa](#) and the Trungtsi took the main seal [tib. spyi dam] of the Tsondu and all of them ran away to Drepung Phodrang [tib. pho brang].

When the four of them gathered in Drepung, as for [Lukhangwa](#), he was really like Manjusri [tib. 'jam dpal dbyangs] and the Dharma King Songtsen Gampo [tib. chos rgyal srong btsan sgam po], but later they didn't use him well in India. You can't find a person like him. Then they called the [rupön](#) and [gyagpön](#) of the regiments and they got their weapons prepared.

After that, they sent a notice saying, "The Tsondu gyendzom will be held on the next day and the representatives led by the Magji Tsondzin [tib. dmag spyi 'tsho 'dzin] Tshipön [Lungshar](#) all have to attend the meeting." So all people were saying that there might be an important matter at the meeting. On the next day, the order was issued to the special bodyguards, the soldiers, the trustworthy Simga [tib. gzim 'gag] and the [Tsendrön](#) that "...if [Lungshar] counterattacks, just kill him."

After that, the [drungja](#) was held. Then the Drönyerchemmo, who was probably Phünraba [tib. phun rab ba], came along and called [Lungshar](#) to the Tsondu gyendzom. At that time, in the place where we were seated, the Tshipön were there and there were over thousand people assembled. Right at that time, [Lungshar](#) ran away towards the back gate of the Potala but the Dakpo [tib. dwags po] Simga seized him by his hair knot [tib. spa lcog]

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and beat him up and brought him to the Regent's room. Then he was imprisoned in Shö Beding [tib. zhol dpal lding] and his house was sealed. At that time, I was a staff officer on the construction of the Trisam [tib. khri zam] Bridge project. Although I had not joined the [tsikhang](#), my late father was there. This was just a result of the karmic law of cause and effect. In the verdict issued for our law case it was written that I could join the Tsikhang before the 11th month. So I joined the Tsikhang and I became a lay official.

Q

[Jinpa] I heard that there were two oaths in the [Lungshar](#) Party: an internal one and an external one. It was said that [Kapshöba](#) said that he saw both of the oaths when the Kashag questioned him Is that correct?

A

Kapshöba was demoted and imprisoned in [Sharchenjog](#) [tib. shar chen lcog]. I saw [Kapshöba](#) when he was demoted. He was wearing a blue Tsechuma [tib. tshal phyu ma], a kind of chuba with openings on both sides. He was barefooted when they brought him down to [Sharchenjog](#).

Q

There was a clerk in the [Tseja](#) named Chagnang [tib. phyag nang] who was the [magpa](#) in my home. At that time he told me that he was the person who brought [Kapshöba](#) to the prison after his hair knot was untied. He said that at that time, [Kapshöba](#) told him, "Clerk! I am a person like a lump of glass washed with milk." [tib. shel gong 'o mas bkrus pa] [this means completely innocent]

A

Kapshöba was very smart. Now probably he is dead.

Q

He was still there [in Tibet] last year. I heard it on a broadcast from Lhasa. Is it true that the Kashag issued the verdict? [Also] Regarding the military organization under the 13th Dalai Lama, what was the condition of that? What was the reason for Drönyerchemmo Ara Karpo [tib. a ra dkar po] disliking him?

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A

I can't say anything about what the Dalai Lama did because he is the all knowing one [tib. thams cad mkhyen pa]. There was also the incident between the Tibetan Government and [Tashilhunpo](#) Labrang. It was mainly caused by [Lungshar](#) and Ara Karpo. There were political mistakes. Actually, the former Panchen Lama was a very good lama but there were mistakes. Bodhisattvas [tib. byang 'chub seems dpa'] won't make many mistakes. This is because we sentient beings have too much delusion. It was the result of the karmic law of cause and effect. So there was not much to blame others.

Q

It was said that the [dzongpön](#) of Lhündrub Dzong [tib. lhun grub rdzong] was killed by Sera monks.

A

He was from the Bumthang [tib. 'Bum thang] household. At that time, I was a government official and I just heard about it. Anyway, I did not pay attention to it.

Q

During the Reting war, a bomb exploded in [Gyambumgang](#) [tib. rje 'bum sgang] Trunyichemmo's house, right?

A

It was said that the bomb exploded and that the bomb was sold by the horse trader [Tse](#) Tobgye [tib. tshe stobs rgyas]. Another [kudrak](#) was also involved in that.

Q

It was said that the bomb was sent by Nyungne Lama [tib. snying gnas bla ma]. Is that true?

A

It was also said that the lay official Horus Shöpa [tib. hor zur gzhung pa] was involved in that.

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Q

Tell about Reting asking for help from the Guomindang and the [Khendrönlosum](#) [tib. mkhan mgron lo gsum] sending the telegram? How did Reting establish the military?

A

I don't have any idea about Reting and the military.

Q

I mean the [Drongdrag](#) [tib. drong drag] Regiment where [Namseling](#) [tib. snam sras gling] was the [depön](#)?

A

I don't remember that.

Q

When they interrogated Reting in the Tsondu, were you there and what did Reting confess?

A

Yes. This was a big error [tib. skyon chen po]. I was not at the meeting as I was standing as a prison guard [tib. srung bya] at the top of [Sharchenjog](#). The main prison guards were Tsidrung Phepo [tib. rtse drung bal po] and the [Lungshar](#) Porgyog.

My late father had recognized the reincarnation of Reting. This lama was a marvelous lama. Reting was born in 7th month in Dakpo Kurab Namgyal [tib. dwags po sku rab nam rgyal]. There was a very heavy snowfall and after that when the snow on the mountain melted, 32 letters of "ra" where the snow didn't melt appeared. The letters remained there for 2-3 days. At that time, my late father submitted a report to the former Dalai Lama about this happening and he told my father, "A great Lama has born, so you should inquire about this."

Q

At that time, what was your father's position?

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A

He was the [dzongpön](#) of Dakpo Gyatsha [tib. rgya tsha]. Then we were told to search for the reincarnation. At that time there was a poor couple living in the stable of the [dzong](#) who gave birth to a son there. My father's wife said that a strange baby was born down there at sunrise this morning. I heard that the baby sat upright just after it was born. There were many things to tell you about this. It was too bad that it happened like this [to Reting].

The family was very poor and they were just eating the leftover food of the people in the [dzong](#). After that my father told them not to leave the baby like this. They should keep it clean. My father brought the baby up and kept it in the [dzong](#) and took good care of it. After about 6 months, the baby became extraordinary. So my father reported this to the Dalai Lama and the Dalai Lama told my father that this was the reincarnation of Reting Lama. "You should take good care of him and keep him there. I will send people soon to recognize him."

One day the boy said, "Today, the monks will come from the monastery. So I have to make a place for tying the horses." His parents asked him, "How could the monks be coming?" Then the boy used some tree branches and stuck pegs in a rock.

Q

Could people see these later?

A

Yes. Then when the people came to receive him, he walked along the river side and there were self appearing [tib. rang byon] images of the 21 Tara on the pebbles. Then my father picked up a pebble and gave it to the boy and he squeezed it and water came out from the pebble. After that, the monks of Reting came to recognize the reincarnation and they held the ceremony. One day they made soup in a clay pot in the boy's home. When the soup over-flowed, the boy used his belt and tied the mouth of the clay pot. We can even see this pot nowadays.

Q

I heard that this clay pot was put in the golden stupa Gelek Dönjo [tib. gser sdong dge legs 'dod 'jo] where the remains of the 13th Dalai Lama were kept.

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A

At that time the clay pot was brought to Lhasa and kept in the Namgen [tib. rnam gan] storeroom in the Potala.

Q

That is definitely true.

A

I don't know about the Tsondu where Reting was interrogated because I was one of the prison guards at the [Sharchenjog](#), but all of a sudden one night something happened. They were talking about the medicine and so on.

On that night, at about 3.30 a.m., when we were standing on guard at the top of the prison, I heard Reting screaming, "Oh!" This was certain. I was there on the top of the [Sharchenjog](#) and Reting was shut in a monk's apartment. I was sort of stunned and when I went to look, [tsidrung] Phepo was coming out. I asked him, "Where are you going?" He said, "Something happened to the old monk. [tib. bla rgan gcig byas song]. I am going to report it to the Tsondu." And he ran over there.

Q

I heard that Reting confiscated an estate that belonged to Tsidrung Phepo so he held a grudge against Reting. The lay official Porgyog was also demoted from the post of [depön](#). That's why they appointed them as the prison guards. I also heard from the watchman of the Trelde Lekhung [tib. 'phral bde las khungs] who was called Trelde Abo, that he heard Reting screaming just as you said. But they were saying that Reting just died normally. Later, Phepo was appointed as the head of Dzonga Dzong [tib. rdzong dga']. He was there when the war took place. I met Phepo at Kyangthang Naga [tib. rkyang thang na ga] in Lhasa in 1958 when he and the lay official Dragdön [tib. brag thon] were departing from Lhasa. They definitely killed Reting.

A

After that, Reting's body was handed over to [Shide](#) monastery. [Kapshöba](#) and another official went to [Shide](#) to hand over the body. Probably there were two Trungtsi. Reting was really was an inconceivable lama with great merit and power.

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Q

At that time, the [dechang](#) and the steward [of Reting] were called to receive the body. I heard this from them because the two of them were slightly related to me and were from Tölung [tib. stod lung]. I heard that at that time when they brought down the body of Reting, my mother told them, "They told you to come to receive the body. But what is left to receive? It is already finished." She told me, "There wasn't any wound or cut, so probably they killed him." Since then, the merit [tib. bsod nams] of the Tibetan society declined, right?

A

Yes, since then we were ruined.

Q

Yes, since then we became degenerate and this became worse year by year.

A

Yes, you are right.

Q

When Reting was alive, it was like the golden era [tib. bska! pa rdzogs ldan] and we were very happy, right?

A

Yes, after he became the Regent, Tibet became very prosperous. During the time of the Reting regency, things were done according to the traditions from the 5th Dalai Lama, for example, how the tea pots were placed in a line when the morning tea ceremony was held. Then the monk servant of Reting would come and pick up one of the teapots and serve the tea starting from the Regent, the [silön](#) and the kalön. After that, the [tsidrun](#)g cooks of the Dalai Lama and some ordinary [tsidrun](#)g would take the teapots and serve all the officials. So from the top -- from the Regent, down to the ordinary officials, the tea was the same quality.

Reting had very good knowledge about the scriptures, but his handwriting was not that good. Silön [Langdün](#) [tib. glang mdun] was very knowledgeable and was the manifestation

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of Manjushri. He had a self-appearing letter A on his feet and that's why he was limping. But Reting didn't get along with him and made him resign. That was a mistake that Reting made. At that time, I was the [gagpa](#) in the Kashag.

Q

Langdün looks like he was doing things carelessly [tib. [tho](#) long mo long], but actually, he wasn't like that.

A

I heard that [Lukhangwa](#) said in the Tsondu, "We don't need a Regent. One Silön will be okay. If people want to adhere to the law there is no difference whether there are two people or one person." When the Silön said that we need a Regent, [Lukhangwa](#) said, "If so, the 13th Dalai Lama gave his personal daily use belongings [tib. nye chas] like corals to Reting and the Dalai Lama had the idea for Reting to become the Regent." This means that Reting would be in accordance with the current situation [to be the Regent]. Reting was confirmed as a Regent in this way. It was not just that some people insisted that Reting should be the Regent. After that, there were both the Regent and the Silön, and it was quite good.

Basically, in Lukhangwa's comments, there wasn't anything that should be discarded [tib. dbyugs rgyu med pa]. When the Chinese said that they came to Tibet to help the Tibetans and that the Chinese and Tibetans should be friendly, [Lukhangwa](#) said, "It is impossible for the Chinese and the Tibetans to become friendly just after they fought and shed blood."

When the Chinese told [Lukhangwa](#) that Tibet was part of China, he said, "If so, the Tibetan King Srongtsen Gampo [tib. srong btsan sgam po] took the Chinese Princess Wengcheng as his wife. So would it be possible that the princess would be given as a bride to their servant? Thui! You are really disgraceful."

When the Chinese told [Lukhangwa](#) that they came to Tibet and they would go back to China after Tibet could stand on its own feet, [Lukhangwa](#) said, "It has been a thousand years since we first stood on our own feet and till now we have been standing on own feet. I don't know what help the Chinese gave to Tibet, but I see that the price of the butter and barley has gone up more than ten times." He was really like a diamond, but later though the Dalai Lama regarded him highly, [tib. gzigs pa gnang] the government didn't use people like him. So they became like horses in the inner stable of the Dalai Lama.

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After that, the Dalai Lama had to make the Sitsab resign and then everything was finished.